<div align="center"><u>REMARKS/ARGUMENTS</u></div>

These remarks are made in response to the Office Action of August 9, 2007 (Office Action). The response is timely filed within the 3 month shortened statutory period, and, as such, no fee is believed due. However, the Office is expressly authorized to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account 50-0951.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-8 and 22-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,948,103 to Fukuzaki (hereinafter Fukuzaki) in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,143,290 to Ginter, et al. (hereinafter Ginter).

<div align="center"><i><u>Amendments to the Claims</u></i></div>

Although Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejections in the Office Action, Applicants nonetheless have amended the claims in order to expedite prosecution of the present application by further emphasizing certain aspects of the claims. Applicants respectfully assert, however, that the claim amendments presented are not intended as, and should not be interpreted as, the surrender of any subject matter. Applicants are not conceding by these amendments that any previously submitted claims are unpatentable over the references of record. Applicants' present claim amendments are submitted only for purposes of facilitating the expeditious prosecution of the present Application. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue any previously submitted claims in one or more continuation and/or divisional patent applications.

In this response, Applicants have amended the claims to emphasize certain aspects. In particular, the independent claims now recite the limitation that the recited electronic documents are stored in a network storage system. Additionally, the independent claims now recite the limitation that in response to a document being associated with an associative object, the storage location of the document is modified, where the modified location is at least one among a new physical location or a new logical location within the network storage system. Claims 4, 5, and 23-29 have also been amended to maintain consistency among the claims. Finally, new claims 44-47 are

presented. All claim amendments in this response are fully supported throughout the Specification, as discussed below. No new subject matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Aspects of the Claims

Prior to discussing the cited references, it may be helpful to discuss certain aspects of the claims. The claims, as amended, recite systems and methods for storing electronic documents. For example, a method, as typified by Claim 1, includes associating at least one electronic document stored in a network storage system with an associative object represented by a digital seal, where the digital seal uniquely corresponds to an image of a seal, stamp, or tape that is visually displayable within a user interface. (See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0024] and [0028].) The method can also include displaying the image within the user interface. (See, e.g., Specification, paragraphs [0007], [0021], [0032], [0044]. and [0045].) The method can additionally include moving the displayed image within the user interface as the digital seal is associated with the at least one electronic document so as to visually simulate the image being affixed to the at least one electronic document, (see, e.g, Specification, paragraphs [0025]-[0027] and [0031]) and generating an audio signal when the displayed image is moved adjacent to or over another image within the user interface representative of the at least one electronic document so as to audibly simulate the image being affixed to the at least one electronic document (see, e.g., Specification, paragraph [0037]).

The method can further include storing one or more metadata attributes for the associative object, where the metadata attributes specify one or more one characteristics related to the associative object. (See FIG. 2 and associated text.). Finally, the method can include modifying a storage location in the network storage system of the at least one electronic document based on at least one of the stored metadata attributes, where the modified storage location is at least one among a new physical storage location and a new

logical storage location in the network storage system, responsive to the document being associated with the associative object. (See, e.g., FIG. 2 and associated text.)

In some embodiments, the characteristics being stored for the associative object include biometric data associated with a user. (See, e.g., Specification, paragraph [0026].) In certain other embodiments, at least one appearance attribute of the digital seal can be altered in response to a valid authorization code being received to access the electronic file. (See, e.g., Specification, para. [0033], [0037], [0041].)

The Claims Define Over the Cited References

As previously noted, Claims 1-8 and 22-29 were rejected as being unpatentable over Fukuzaki in view of Ginter. Fukuzaki discloses a system and method for signing documents using a secure seal. Ginter discloses a system and method for secure delivery of content using seals. However, in view of the claims, as amended, and the arguments presented below, Applicants respectfully submit that Fukuzaki and Ginter, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention.

First, Ginter fails to disclose generating an audio simulation of the displayed image of the digital seal being affixed to an electronic document as asserted in the Office Action. As acknowledged on page 5 of the Office Action, such a feature is not disclosed in Fukuzaki. Applicants respectfully submit, moreover, that nowhere does Ginter disclose or suggest the generation of a sound to audibly simulate any type of event. The cited portions of Ginter only disclose a method for encoding information in a visual seal included in digitally delivered document. However, none of these portions disclose or suggest the use of audio cues to enhance the process of inserting this seal into the document. Furthermore, even though Ginter discloses that the encoded data can include audio content, nowhere does Ginter disclose or suggest enhancing the human experience in securing or sealing such documents by generating sounds associated with the seals. In contrast, the claims, as amended, recite the limitation that a sound is generated to audibly signal the user of an association event occurring. Such a configuration, provides the

capability for enabling a user to audibly confirm the user's action of properly applying a digital seal to a document.

Second, Fukuzaki fails to disclose or suggest associating a separate associative object associated with an existing electronic document stored in a network storage system. In Fukuzaki, the result of using a digital seals is not an object associated with an existing object, but instead the creation of a new version of the electronic document. For example, as illustrated in FIGs. 1 and 6-10, Fukuzaki discloses using the original document D001 and combining it with the digital seal D002 to generate new document D003. Nowhere does Fukuzaki disclose simply associating digital seal D002 with original document D001 without disturbing or modifying the contents of the original document D001. In contrast, the claims, as amended, recite only the association of an associative object with an electronic document. Such a configuration allows the underlying document to remain unaffected as one or more associative objects are associated with it. Therefore, a user can choose to modify an object or a document separately, allowing increased flexibility in editing of documents and objects. For example, for an object associated with multiple documents, the object can be modified once to change the storage location of all documents associated with the object.

Third, Fukuzaki fails to disclose or suggest modifying a storage location of an electronic document in the network storage system, based on metadata attributes of the associative object. According to the Office Action, such a limitation is disclosed throughout Fukuzaki. In particular, the Office Action cites three particular portions of Fukuzaki in support of the asserted rejection. However, Applicants respectfully submit that none of these portions disclose or suggest the claimed limitations.

In the first cited portion (the Abstract), Fukuzaki discloses that storage of documents can occur in a portable media to increase security. However, Fukuzaki's Abstract makes no mention of storing an electronic document in a network storage system or providing any mechanism to change the location in the network based on the

associated object. In fact, the step of storing in a portable location is not disclosed in this portion to occur in response to some characteristic of the seal.

In the second cited portion (col. 7, lines 29-62), Fukuzaki only discloses methods for delivering and storing documents in a processing device for affixing the seal. (See col. 7, lines 26-28.) Nowhere in this portion is it disclosed how the storage of documents is affected *after* affixing the seal. In particular, the modification of a network storage location is neither disclosed nor suggested in this portion as a result of affixing the seal.

In the third cited portion (col. 20, lines 8-19), Fukuzaki discloses only how a standard seal data is modified. However, nowhere in this portion is it disclosed or suggested to modify a storage location of a document associated with the modified seal. In fact, this portion is explicitly limited to modifications of the seal image and makes not mention of whether the electronic document is modified in any way.

Applicants respectfully submit that Fukuzaki does not disclose a modification of a storage location of an electronic document based on the associated seal. Furthermore, such a limitation is not disclosed in Ginter. Fukuzaki and Ginter, only disclose the use of seals for purposes of providing authentication of electronic documents. In other words, the seal is additional content added to the document. In contrast, the features recited in the claims disclose modifying the storage location of the electronic document based on the metadata associated with the seal or associative object. Such a configuration is advantageous because storage of documents can occur irrespective of the content of the documents. Instead, the storage is dependent on the metadata associated with the seal, allowing the storage scheme for documents to be customized based on user adjustment of the seal's characteristics rather than a content of the documents.

Accordingly, none of the cited references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest every feature of independent Claims 1 and 22. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 22 define over the prior art. Applicants respectfully submit also that, whereas each of the other claims depends from either Claim 1 or Claim 22 while reciting additional features, the dependent claims likewise define over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that this application is now in full condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Applicants request that the Examiner call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any matter within this Amendment, or if the Examiner believes a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,

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